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AN
ILLINOIS FARMER ON PROTECTION.

LETTERS FROM AN ILLINOIS FARMER.

THE DUTY ON PIG-IRON.

ROCKFORD, ILL., *Saturday Evening, March 3, 1872.*

EDITOR OF THE IRON AGE:

My Dearly Beloved Sir:—Hail Columby! Hallalujah! I'm happy all over! I hain't got words to express how glorious I feel!

When the papers announced some time since that the House of Representatives had voted three to one (I think it was) to admit tea and coffee "duty free," I *did* shout some; for that was a measure I had so harped upon around these parts, and in my letters to you two or three years ago, that my neighbors good naturedly called me "Old Free-tea;" and, while they advocated the thing quite as strongly as I did, they despaired of ever seeing the day when even *one* House of Congress would pass it. *Things is movin'!*

But to the point of this jollification. When my man came from town this evening, and brought, among other papers and letters, the *New York Tribune* of Thursday last, and I saw that little Sunset Cox, who used to represent that part of Ohio I moved from (almost before he was born), but who had to go down to your city and join your Tammany Hall loco-focos in order to keep himself in Congress, had moved to reduce the duty on pig-iron two more dollars per ton, and thus bring it down to five dollars from nine, where our folks put it in 1861, and could only get thirty-five votes to sustain him, while there were eighty-three solid against his motion, I jumped up, kicked over my writing table here in the library, and began to roar and shout so you could have heard me a half mile off. My good wife came rushing from the kitchen, where she happened to be engaged at something, and when she saw me capering around the little library like a boy with a new top, said, in her quiet manner, with that little spice of dignity I so much admire in her, and which did more to win this old heart when we were both

nearly fifty years younger than we now are (oh, how she'll pull my ears when she reads this), "Why, father, what on earth is the matter? Are you crazy? What—what has happened?" I made no reply, but caught her around the waist with my right arm, seized her right hand with my left, gave her a kiss and waltzed her around the table which lay in the centre of the room to a familiar air she and I had often waltzed to when we were young, until she was well out of breath, when I sat her down on the sofa. By this time old Bettie, my wife's right bower in the kitchen for the past twenty years, had come to the library door to see what it was all about. When I saw her standing there, I felt so splendid I caught her, too, by the waist, and made her waltz a little, whether she would or not, greatly to her and my wife's amusement. Just at that moment my two little grandsons, who had been out skating on the pond where we gather our ice to keep us cool in the long summer months, came in, and their eyes almost popping out of their heads at such a strange performance by grandpa, and that, too, in his own library, which is usually so quiet and so orderly that they almost walk on tip-toe when they come to ask me a question about their studies or get a book, and going up to their grandma, said, in a loud whisper, "Grandma, dear grandma! what is the matter? is grandpa crazy?"

By this time, you may well imagine, with my huge bulk, although I take plenty of exercise and feel as light on foot as I did forty years ago, after all this romping, waltzing, and hurrahing, I began to puff somewhat myself; so I bounced down on the sofa by the side of my wife, and gave her such a grizzly bear hug around her waist as to make her think her time had come. When I stopped to breathe a little, she said, "Well now, father, for pity's sake, do tell us what this is all about?" I said, "Hand me that *Tribune* there, and I'll soon tell you." After I had read the whole account of the vote on Cox's resolution, analysis by States and all, my good wife, who, if anything, is more of a protectionist than I am, said, "Thank the Lord for that! I am glad to know that we have lived to see the day when the American people *appear* to be coming to their senses on that subject. I begin to think, father, that all you have written for the papers and talked for the past forty years, without the least prospect of benefiting yourself more than the great mass of the people on this *self-preservation question*, may come to something after all.

"This vote, and the one on tea and coffee, seem to me to show pretty clearly (notwithstanding Mr. Speaker Blaine only put *three* real dyed-in-the-wool protectionists on his Ways and Means Committee in this Congress) that the constituents of a very large majority of the members of both political parties have caught the idea you expressed in one of your letters to *The Iron Age*, some time last summer; when you advised protectionists all over the country to make themselves heard and felt, as *protectionists* solely,

without any regard whatever to the two great political parties; that they give their Congressmen clearly to understand that if they do not take measures to protect them and theirs from the half paid and half starved labor of the Old World, they will send Congressmen to Washington who will do it." I said, "Well, mother, I have never thought that my little penny whistle on this great subject has amounted to much, but when I see, as the *Tribune* states, two-thirds of the Republicans west of the Alleghany Mountains voting for protection, I begin to feel that *something* is moving *somebody*. I only hope that our lives may be spared yet a little longer, until we can see this policy of *self-preservation* as thoroughly adopted by our whole country as it has been for so many years by the entire population of Pennsylvania, irrespective of party politics.

"Self-preservation is a fundamental principle, while free-trade and protection are only matters of local policy. Self-preservation in England requires *free-trade*, while in the United States, France, Germany and Russia, which practice it, it is *protection*. Spain, Turkey, Egypt and British India, which need protection, but practice free-trade, are ruined. China has practiced protection for centuries, with which she supports in comfort, on a territory a little larger than the United States east of the Mississippi, nearly one-third of the population of the globe. I say 'in comfort,' by which I mean they are well fed, well clothed, and more of her people can read and write than those of any other nation, unless it be Saxony or Prussia. It is now clearly for the best interest of the people of this country to practice protection. If the time should come when it will be equally for their interest to adopt free-trade, they most assuredly will do so. When people talk to me about the 'principles' of free-trade and protection, I always reply, 'Away with such twaddle, it is all only a question of dollars and cents.'"

If the Republican Convention, which is to be held at Philadelphia next June, will give us a fair and square protection plank in its platform, with Grant as our leader, and the free-traders will nominate our Mr. Senator Trumbull as their standard bearer, we'll lay him out so effectually that he will have to get an affidavit from some Chicago notary public, to prove that he had ever been a candidate for the Presidency. I have travelled about these Northwestern States considerably, in my quiet way, within the past six months, and I tell *you*, the people are getting to understand this question thoroughly. I did not dream, however, that they had impressed their views so effectually on the minds of their respective Congressmen, as to produce the result I have mentioned at this early day. But so it is, and I thank God and take courage.

Your rejoiced fellow-laborer for the good of his race,

AN ILLINOIS FARMER.

NEW HAMPSHIRE ELECTION.

(Extract.)

ROCKFORD, ILL., *Saturday Evening, March 16, 1872.*

EDITOR OF THE IRON AGE:

Dear Sir:—When I saw by the papers, some time since, that the Democrats in New Hampshire had fairly and squarely thrown down the glove to the protectionists, in their then approaching State election, by scattering free-trade documents and pictorial illustrations broadcast over their whole State, I looked up at Father Carey's picture (he so kindly sent me, through you, about a year ago, and which I had framed and hung over our library mantel-piece), and rubbing my hands, said, "Now, my worthy old veteran, we've got 'em sure. Whichever of the two great political parties adopts free-trade as its watchword, in whatever part of the country, I care not, is bound to go under, as certain as night follows day." The picture seemed to nod the cordial assent Mr. Carey would have given if he had been present. Of course, after this, I watched the New Hampshire canvass with more than ordinary interest, to see whether our protectionists would be on the alert, and meet these enemies of their country's prosperity (some wilfully, but the great majority ignorantly) face to face, and discuss this question. I did not have to wait and watch long, for my Eastern papers were soon filled with accounts of the good work of our friends in all parts of the State; holding meetings, not in the interest of the Republican party, but in the advocacy of "PROTECTION TO AMERICAN LABOR," pure and simple—nothing more or less; and what has been the result? A total Waterloo defeat of the free-trade Democracy from one end of that State to the other.

The town of Manchester, which gave the Democratic candidate for Governor, last year, 33 majority, now gives 480 majority the other way—a clear loss of 513 votes to free-trade. If the Republicans gained these 513 votes, I am the more delighted, for I thus kill two birds with the one stone; I serve protection and Republicanism at the same time. But I repeat what I have so often said before, "ardent Republican as I am, if it should come to pass that the Republican party, at its coming National Convention, should be even *silent* on this question, and the Democratic party at its coming National Convention should adopt protection, I certainly should go with it, and in so going I would have plenty of Republican company."—*From the Iron Age, New York.*

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